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Kentucky Residents Urged to Double-Check Their Coverage During Get Smart About Insurance Week

Frankfort, Ky. — Although most Americans (67 percent) feel they have about the right amount of insurance coverage, only 34 percent say they understand the details of the coverage "very well," according to a recent survey by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC).

When it comes to insurance, knowledge is your best policy. That's why the NAIC and the Kentucky Department of Insurance are encouraging consumers to get smart about their coverage during the second annual Get Smart About Insurance Week, Jan. 20–24.

During the week, consumers are urged to call the Get Smart Hotline toll-free at 1-866-SMARTWEEK or visit www.naic.org/gsw to request a free brochure and get information on what they need and should expect from insurance coverage. An interactive quiz allowing visitors to gauge their level of "insurance smarts" is available on the Kentucky DOI Web site at insurance.ky.gov

"Get Smart About Insurance Week isn't about selling or canceling policies," said Kentucky Insurance Commissioner Janie A. Miller. "It's about making sure your family is properly covered. We believe state insurance commissioners, along with agents, are the best resources for insurance-related questions and concerns."

The 34 percent of Americans who say they understand their policies very well represents a rise of six percentage points from last year's survey.

To gauge Americans' understanding and perceptions of their insurance coverage, national research company OCR International conducted a telephone survey of 1,025 adults. Respondents were asked a range of questions based on the various types of insurance coverage they may have, including life, home, auto, health, personal liability, disability and others.

The youngest adults (age 18 to 24) are the least likely to understand the details of their insurance "very well" (15 percent), while understanding increases among the most-experienced consumers (age 65+) to 50 percent.

"We're glad to see understanding is on the rise," Miller said. "However, it's still troubling that while two-thirds of adults feel they have the right amount of insurance, only one-third seem to fully understand what they have."

According to Miller, there are several steps consumers can take to get smart about their insurance coverage.

"We recommend consumers know what kind of coverage they need before they shop around," Miller said. "It's up to consumers to watch out for their own best interests."

Other recommendations from the Kentucky DOI include:

- Check with the Kentucky DOI for free tips and up-to-date information prior to purchasing health, life, auto, home or other insurance coverage. The toll-free number is 800-595-6053.
- Schedule a routine "check-up" with your insurance providers at least once a year.
- Inquire about the cost benefit of opting for higher deductibles.
- Ask specifically about discounts for good driving records, good health, good grades, special education or training.
- Shop around for identical products and services. Not every company charges the same rate.
- Remember an insurance policy is a legal document. Read it carefully.

"You may not have the coverage you need. You may have more than you need. You may feel you've been treated unfairly when shopping for insurance, or you may just want help understanding how different kinds of insurance work. No matter what your situation is, we are there to help you get smart about insurance," Miller said.

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MEDIA NOTE: Interviews with state regulators and NAIC representatives are available. Contact Ronda Sloan, Kentucky DOI Communications Director, at 502-564-6098 for Kentucky insurance information. For stories featuring a national focus contact Kris Welschmeyer, NAIC, at 816-783-8016, Michele Compton, NAIC, at 816-783-8003, or Robin Broder, Fleishman-Hillard, at 816-512-2385. Kentucky consumers may receive more information by contacting the Kentucky DOI at 800-595-6053 or visiting the Web site at insurance.ky.gov